

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. In a messaging system comprising a rights management server that controls the type of operations principals can perform on protected content and a message server that receives messages and makes them available to principals or their agents, a method of pre-licensing content subject to rights management in order to allow a principal access to the content when the principal does not have access to the rights management server, the method comprising acts of:

receiving, by the message server, a message which is subject to rights management in that access to at least a part of the message is controlled through a rights management server;

receiving, by the message server, a publishing license for use in identifying the message to the rights management server;

requesting, by the message server on behalf of one or more principals, at least one use license for allowing the one or more principals access to the message, wherein the request includes the publishing license to identify the message to the rights management server; and

receiving, by the message server on behalf of the one or more principals, the at least one use license so that the one or more principals may access the message without having to request the at least one use license from the rights management server.

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2. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least a part of the message controlled through the rights management server is encrypted, and wherein the use license comprises a content key used in decrypting the part of the message that is encrypted.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the part of the message that is encrypted is at least one of a protected contact, protected document, protected calendar item or protected meeting request.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of requesting at least one use license further includes sending an authentication to the rights management server to verify that the message server has the authority to obtain the at least one use license on behalf of the one or more principals.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the message server requests multiple use licenses on behalf of the one or more principals so that the one or more principals may access the message on multiple machines.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one use license is stored by the message server separate from the message.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the publishing license includes a reference to the one or more principals such that when the message server requests the at least one use license, the rights management server may validate that the one or more principals are intended to have access to the message.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the publishing license further includes at least one rights expression that limits the types of operations the one or more principals are allowed to perform on the message.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the at least one rights expression in the publishing license limits the one or more principals' operation in at least one of re-licensing, printing, coping, forwarding, sharing, delegating and saving.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the rights expression is a default value of read only.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the rights expression includes an expiration feature, which limits at least one of the number of times or a time period the at least one rights expression is available.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one principal is a process, user, machine, server or client.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the publishing license further comprises one or more of a hash used to verify the message has not changed and a signing by the rights management server used to verify that the publishing license is valid.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the publishing license references multiple principals for which the message is intended, and wherein the message sever retrieves use licenses on behalf of the multiple principals by a batch request process for balancing the load on the rights management sever.

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15. In a messaging system comprising a rights management server that controls the type of operations principals can perform on protected content and a message server that receives messages and makes them available to principals or their agents, a method of pre-licensing content subject to rights management in order to allow a principal access to the content when the principal does not have access to the rights management server, the method comprising steps for:

determining a received message is subject to rights management in that access to at least a part of the message is controlled through a rights management server;

using a received publishing license for identifying the message to the rights management server;

obtaining, by the message server on behalf of one or more principals, at least one use license for allowing the one or more principals access to the message without having the one or more principals request the at least one use license from the rights management server.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the at least a part of the message controlled through the rights management server is encrypted, and wherein the use license comprises a content key used in decrypting the part of the message that is encrypted.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the part of the message that is encrypted is at least one of a protected contact, protected document, protected calendar item or protected meeting request.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein step for obtaining at least one use license includes the act of requesting, by the message server on behalf of the one or more principals, the at least one use license, wherein the request includes the received publishing license for identifying the message to the rights management server, and wherein the request includes an authentication certificate for the rights management server for verifying that the message server has the authority to obtain the at least one use license on behalf of the one or more principals.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the message server requests multiple use licenses on behalf of the one or more principals so that the one or more principals may access the message on multiple machines.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the at least one use license is stored by the message server separate from the message.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein the received publishing license includes a reference to the one or more principals such that when the message server requests the at least one use license, the rights management server may validate that the one or more principals are intended to have access to the message.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the publishing license further includes at least one rights expression that limits the types of operations the one or more principals are allowed to perform on the message.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the at least one rights expression in the publishing license limits the one or more principals' operation in at least one of re-licensing, printing, coping, forwarding, sharing, delegating and saving.

24. The method of claim 21, wherein the rights expression is a default value of read only.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the rights expression includes an expiration feature, which limits at least one of the number of times or a time period the at least one rights expression is available.

26. The method of claim 15, wherein the at least one principal is a process, user, machine, server or client.

27. The method of claim 15, wherein the received publishing license further comprises one or more of a hash used to verify the message has not changed and a signing by the rights management server used to verify that the publishing license is valid.

28. The method of claim 15, wherein the received publishing license references multiple principals for which the message is intended, and wherein the message sever retrieves use licenses on behalf of the multiple principals by a batch requests process for balancing the load on the rights management sever.

29. In a messaging system comprising a rights management server that controls the type of operations principals can perform on protected content and a message server that receives messages and makes them available to principals or their agents, a computer program product comprising one or more computer readable media carrying computer executable instructions that implement a method of pre-licensing content subject to rights management in order to allow a principal access to the content when the principal does not have access to the rights management server, the method comprising acts of:

receiving, by the message server, a message which is subject to rights management in that access to at least a part of the message is controlled through a rights management server;

receiving, by the message server, a publishing license for use in identifying the message to the rights management server;

requesting, by the message server on behalf of one or more principals, at least one use license for allowing the one or more principals access to the message, wherein the request includes the publishing license to identify the message to the rights management server; and

receiving, by the message server on behalf of the one or more principals, the at least one use license so that the one or more principals may access the message without having to request the at least one use license from the rights management server.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the publishing license includes a reference to the one or more principals such that when the message server requests the at least one use license, the rights management server may validate that the one or more principals are intended to have access to the message.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the publishing license further includes at least one rights expression that limits the types of operations the one or more principals are allowed to perform on the message.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein the at least one rights expression in the publishing license limits the one or more principals' operation in at least one of re-licensing, printing, coping, forwarding, sharing, delegating and saving.

33. The method of claim 30, wherein the rights expression is a default value of read only.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein the rights expression includes an expiration feature, which limits at least one of the number of times or a time period the at least one rights expression is available.

35. The method of claim 29, wherein the at least one principal is a process, user, machine, server or client.

36. The method of claim 29, wherein the publishing license references multiple principals for which the message is intended, and wherein the message sever retrieves use licenses on behalf of the multiple principals by a batch request process for balancing the load on the rights management sever.

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37. In a messaging system comprising a rights management server that controls the type of operations principals can perform on protected content and a message server that receives messages and makes them available to principals or their agents, a computer program product comprising one or more computer readable media carrying computer executable instructions that implement a method of pre-licensing content subject to rights management in order to allow a principal access to the content when the principal does not have access to the rights management server, the method comprising steps for:

determining a received message is subject to rights management in that access to at least a part of the message is controlled through a rights management server;

using a received publishing license for identifying the message to the rights management server;

obtaining, by the message server on behalf of one or more principals, at least one use license for allowing the one or more principals access to the message without having the one or more principals request the at least one use license from the rights management server.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the at least a part of the message controlled through the rights management server is encrypted, and wherein the use license comprises a content key used in decrypting the part of the message that is encrypted, and wherein the part of the message that is encrypted is at least one of a protected contact, protected document, protected calendar item or protected meeting request.

39. The method of claim 37, wherein step for obtaining at least one use license includes the act of requesting, by the message server on behalf of the one or more principals, the at least one use license, wherein the request includes the received publishing license for identifying the message to the rights management server, and wherein the request includes an authentication for the rights management server for verifying that the message server has the authority to obtain the at least one use license on behalf of the one or more principals.

40. The method of claim 37, wherein the message server requests multiple use licenses on behalf of the one or more principals so that the one or more principals may access the message on multiple machines.

41. The method of claim 37, wherein the at least one use license is stored by the message server separate from the message.

42. The method of claim 37, wherein the received publishing license further includes at least one rights expression that limits the one or more principals' operation in at least one of re-licensing, printing, coping, forwarding, sharing, delegating and saving, and wherein the rights expression includes an expiration feature, which limits at least one of the number of times or a time period the at least one rights expression is available.

43. The method of claim 37, wherein the at least one principal is a process, user, machine, server or client.

44. The method of claim 37, wherein the received publishing license references multiple principals for which the message is intended, and wherein the message sever retrieves use licenses on behalf of the multiple principals by a batch requests process for balancing the load on the rights management sever.

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